

## faithfully by finnxwheeler

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** M/M

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven, Jennifer Hayes, Lucas Sinclair, Max, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Mike Wheeler & Will Byers, Will Byers & Mike Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2017-04-25

**Updated:** 2017-04-25

**Packaged:** 2022-04-02 00:29:45

**Rating:** General Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 4,828

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

Mike and Will attend Prom together, despite secretly dating. What happens when Will gets fed up with their secret relationship?

## faithfully

“Mom! PLEASE stop fussing with my tie! It’s FINE!”

Joyce Hopper stepped back with a smile, holding her hands up in mock surrender. She admired her youngest son, Will, in his black suit and powder-blue tie, looking more like an adult than he ever had before. He was ready to attend his senior prom, an indication that he had grown up too quickly for Joyce’s comfort. Her eldest son, Jonathan, had even come home to Hawkins from New York City, taking time out of his busy schedule of photographing models to take photos of the occasion. Joyce didn’t want to hire any other photographer for their personal photos, and Jonathan always did an exceptional job for no cost to his family. Besides, Joyce wanted to get as many as possible for herself, Jonathan, and Karen, who was the mother of Will’s date, Mike Wheeler.

It was no secret among their families and friends that Mike & Will were romantically involved. In fact, it wasn’t a surprise to any of them when Will and Mike began secretly dating, but it WAS a bit of a shock when they announced their plans to attend Prom together. Their parents didn’t figure they’d want to go to a romantic event such as the prom while secretly involved, but both Mike and Will knew that it was their last year and last big event before graduation. What did they have to lose if they were somehow found out? When they both went to Purdue in the fall, how many of the people they went to school with would they see? None, most likely, and that suited both boys JUST fine.

Jonathan took a few more photos, grinning as Will playfully rolled his eyes between the blinding camera flashes. Joyce’s eyes scanned Will’s suit again, making a few more adjustments to his tie as Will groaned loudly. “MOM!”

“For God’s sake, Joyce,” Will’s stepfather, Jim Hopper, said as he entered the living room. “Give the poor kid a break!”

“Thank you, Dad!” Will cried in relief.

“I think Mike is here,” Jonathan said, jerking his thumb toward the living room window as a red Trans-Am ambled up the driveway.

Joyce began to practically BOUNCE with exhilaration, putting one arm around Will’s shoulders while her other hand gripped Will’s opposite forearm. “Oh! Do you have his corsage?”

“Right here,” Jonathan said, bringing it over and handing it to Will.

It was a white carnation with a silver ribbon that would pin to Mike's lapel. It would match his suit perfectly, Will reckoned, if it actually WAS the color Mike had said it would be. "Good thing I'm here, huh?"

"Thanks, Jonathan," Will said gratefully, holding the small box in his nervous hands as he waited for the inevitable knock on the front door. It seemed to take an ETERNITY, but it finally came a moment later.

Hopper moved to answer the door, smiling as he saw a visibly-jittered Mike standing there with a small box of his own. Hopper stood aside to let Mike inside the home, and Will's jaw dropped when he saw his handsome boyfriend's dressed-up appearance. The eighteen-year-old who usually wore stripes, STAR WARS T-shirts, blue jeans, and his unruly dark hair down nearly to his shoulders, had cleaned up quite well. He was wearing the dark gray suit he'd told Will that he'd be wearing, with black trim around the wide lapel with a black collar, a black bow tie, and his long hair tied back with a black ribbon as a small lock of hair framed his face. Mike also seemed to be mesmerized by Will's appearance, for he stared at him in awe before realizing that everyone's eyes were on him. His freckled cheeks dusted pink, clearing his throat and stepping over to Will. Joyce was trying to contain her joy and excitement, and Will could tell that not being able to fuss and muss was KILLING her.

"I um...got your corsage," Mike managed after a moment.

"Me, too," Will replied, holding the white box in view. "It'll match r-really nicely with y-your...suit."

Jonathan snapped away as Mike pinned the corsage in his box-- a light-blue tipped white carnation with a dark blue & silver ribbon--to Will's suit. Jonathan also took photos of Will pinning his corsage for Mike to Mike's lapel. Then, he snapped a few pictures of Will and Mike posing together, a few of which included Hopper and Joyce. After Mike shook hands with Jonathan and Hopper, they were ready to leave—but Joyce had other plans.

"Tell Karen we'll get her copies of the pictures, like she wanted!" Joyce cried. "They should be developed soon!"

"Will do, Mrs. Hopper!" Mike said with a toothy grin, his hand on the small of Will's back as he tried to lead him to the front door and out of the Overexcited Mother Zone.

"When will you start calling me Joyce?" Joyce asked with a mock pout. "You're practically family, Mike, and have been for years!"

Mike chuckled. "I'll have to get back to you on that one!"

"When—" Joyce began, but Hopper cut her off.

"Joyce, let them get going!" he said with an affectionate laugh. "They need to grab a bite to eat beforehand! Let them! Do you really want them to be late for their very last Prom?"

"Sorry, Jimmy!" Joyce chirped, which caused Hopper to roll his eyes. He HATED being called by that nickname, and Joyce knew it, too. She always loved picking on him when he got stern and into his "authority mode," as she called it.

"Have him back by midnight, no later," Hopper told Mike sternly. "Don't make me come out looking for you, because you KNOW I will."

"Of course, sir," Mike said, swallowing thickly. Hopper ALWAYS had a way of intimidating the hell out of him, and tonight was certainly no exception. "I'll have him home at midnight on the dot. Just like Cinderella."

"You'd better," Hopper warned, giving Mike a gentle clap on the back. Due to Hopper being much bigger than Mike, the soft touch nearly caused Mike to fall face-down to the floor. "You kids go on, now. Have fun!"

"We will!" Mike said quickly, ushering Will outside and toward the Trans-Am before Joyce could think of something else to stop them for.

Mike opened Will's door for him, Will chortling as Mike got into the driver's seat. "I didn't get a chance to say it in the house," Mike said, "but you look so...amazing. Stunningly handsome as always, but like...tenfold."

"So do you," Will said honestly. "You clean up quite well, Mike Wheeler."

"Shush," Mike replied with a blush, starting the car and pulling out of the driveway. "You look way nicer!"

"Bullcrap!" Will exclaimed. "You look like a literal Disney prince! You know those movies we have to watch with your little sister when we have to babysit her?"

"Yeah."

"You look like a prince from those movies. The princesses are the ones who usually undergo the transformation, but this time it's reversed! The PRINCE is the one who has transformed from a nerdboy and into a sexy, long-haired—"

"If you don't stop being corny, I'm turning this car around," Mike

said, trying to sound annoyed but failing when a smile tugged at his lips. "YOU'RE the prince here, my darling."

"No!" Will cried. "Don't lie to yourself, Wheeler!"

"Me? Lie? No!" Mike said, feigning offense. "Never!"

"Don't miss the turnout to the restaurant, Prince Charming," Will said playfully. "I'm STARVING."

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Dinner consisted of steak and fries at a fairly expensive restaurant, with Mike paying for the entire meal. Will had insisted on paying his own half, but Mike would have none of it. Will had even tried sneaking his share of the cost into Mike's glovebox, but was caught and told to put it back. After leaving the restaurant, Mike drove to the Elks' Club—the location of their prom—where their friends were already waiting.

Dustin & his girlfriend Emily, Lucas & his girlfriend Amanda, and Eleven & her secret love, Diana, were all crowded around together in the parking lot, talking and laughing. Dustin and Lucas were each in suits—Dustin's dark blue with a ruffled white shirt underneath and black bow tie, and Lucas' maroon with a bright-red tie. Emily was in a gorgeous powder-blue gown that fell off the left shoulder, while Amanda wore a beautiful light pink gown that made the reddish highlights in her dark brown hair pop nicely. El was in purple and black, while Diana was rocking yellow. They all looked like royalty, and Will couldn't help but grin as Mike opened his car door for him once more. Upon stepping out, they began making their way toward their group of friends.

"Damn!" Lucas cried as they drew closer. "Look at Mike! He can clean UP!"

Mike's cheeks flushed as the group turned to look at them, rolling their eyes jokingly. "So do you, SINCLAIR."

"Watch it, WHEELER," Lucas replied with a chuckle. "Only the football team can call me that."

"Oh yeah!" Will said with a cheeky smile. "Mr. Hot-Shot QB-one!"

"You both look really great," Dustin complimented before Lucas could retort. "Truly. I guess we all aren't used to seeing each other like this, huh?"

"True," Will said. "We—"

"THERE you losers are!" a voice sounded from behind Will. With a grin, he turned to face his other best friend, Jennifer Hayes. She was beaming. "Damn, Byers. Lookin' yummy!"

“Jenny!” Will cried happily, throwing his arms around the petite girl in a big hug. He pulled back to observe her dress—a gorgeous wine-red number with black trim—and her updone blond hair. “How are you? Where’s Max?”

As if on cue, Jennifer’s girlfriend Max joined the group. The tall redhead was sporting a dark green gown that suited her perfectly, with her long hair curled and slung over one shoulder. She kissed Jennifer openly and proudly, and Will felt a sudden pang of envy. He wanted so badly to kiss Mike in front of everyone to show that they were in love, but they were still keeping things a secret. Jennifer and Max had been out publicly for a few months, partly because everyone knew and partly because they didn’t care what other people thought. Will found himself wishing that he and Mike could be like that, too, but they each had a lot to lose if things went badly. Mike could lose his spot on the swim team, and Will could lose his spots in the art club and the debate team. It was too much of a risk, one that Mike seemingly wasn’t ready to take yet.

“—inside, Will?” Mike was saying.

“What?” Will asked, noticing that the others had already gone inside while he was lost in thought. “I didn’t catch that.”

“I said, do you wanna go inside?” Mike repeated, frowning deeply.

“Are you alright?” Then, in a lower tone: “Are you having visions of the Upside Down again?”

“No,” Will assured him. “I was just thinking, is all.”

“About?”

“I’ll tell you later.”

“Okay. You ready to go in?”

“As ready as I’ll ever be. Let’s do this.”

Mike held his arm out for Will, who took it with a smile. He led Will inside, where students, as well as faculty and their dates and a few parent chaperones, were seated around a series of round tables with white iron chairs. The room was HUGE, and there were tables as far as the eye could see. In the center was the dancefloor, and off to one wall was the DJ booth. At the far end of the room was the setup to get pictures taken, and the line wasn’t too long at that moment.

“Wanna get our picture taken first?” Mike questioned. “While the line is still so short?”

“Yeah,” Will said, waving at El as she gestured for them to come over. She, Dustin, Lucas, Max, Jennifer, and the girlfriends were seated at two different tables side-by-side, with two chairs left at El,

Diana, Max, & Jennifer's table. Will mouthed "One second" to El and she nodded, saving the two seats as Mike and Will made their way to the photo line.

Will couldn't say why, exactly, but he was feeling fairly anxious.

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After the photo was taken (nothing too romantic to avoid suspicion), Will and Mike finally made it to their table. By then the event was officially starting, with the bright lights dimming and being replaced by deep pink. The music also began at once. Dustin and Lucas wiggled their eyebrows at Mike and Will when one of Lucas' football teammates, who was sharing their table with his girlfriend, wasn't looking. Max was fussing with something on the strap of Jennifer's dress, and Diana & El were talking amongst themselves. Jennifer gave Max a quick peck on the lips, which caused Dustin and Lucas to groan.

"PDA!" Lucas cried.

"Go somewhere private!" Dustin joked.

"Oh, PDA your ASS, Sinclair!" Max said with mock annoyance. "If I had a dollar for every time I saw you kissing Amanda in public, I'd have enough money for a year of college! Is this because I kinda-sorta-almost was your girlfriend five years ago? Awww, are you jealous?"

"No," Lucas said. "I was only kidding! It wouldn't be Prom if I didn't pick on you a little. Also, you were almost Dustin's girlfriend, too!"

"She was cute!" Dustin piped up. "Still is, but she has someone much nicer now!"

"Oh, stop calling me cute, Curly Boy!" Max whined. "How would you like it if I called you—"

"Will you all shut up?" Mike griped. "They're playing one of my favorite songs!"

Simple Minds' "(Don't You) Forget About Me" was playing through the hall, and Jennifer was rolling her eyes. "What a DWEEB," she teased. "Like, oh my GOD."

"Hey!" Mike said. "I'll have you know that THE BREAKFAST CLUB was a cinematic masterpiece!"

"Yeah, and so were all three STAR WARS films," Jennifer said sarcastically. "Your taste in films is questionably suckish, Wheeler."

"YOU'RE questionably suckish, Hayes," Mike shot back, but winked to let her know that he was only playing along with her. Jennifer winked in return, before turning her attention back to Max.

Mike then looked over at his own date, seeing that Will was resting his chin in his palm while staring down at the white tablecloth. His styled brown hair had streaks of pink from the lighting, and the very same lights danced across his smooth, flawless complexion. Even as deep in thought as Will seemed to be, Mike couldn't help but observe how truly beautiful Will actually was. Carefully, Mike reached over to take Will's smaller hand in his large one, stroking the back of it with his thumb as Will jumped and turned toward Mike.

"Sorry," Mike apologized. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah," Will said. "Thinking."

"That's the second time in less than an hour," Mike observed. "I'm beginning to worry, Will."

"Come with me somewhere private," Will said. "This isn't a conversation to have in a crowded room, yelling over the music for everyone to hear. This is an EXTREMELY private conversation. Okay?"

Mike nodded, him & Will standing and sneaking away from their bantering friends. As Simple Minds turned into a-ha's "Take on Me," the two slipped out to the parking lot. They walked to Mike's car, just to be safe from any potential listeners, and Will immediately began to talk.

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A dazed and distracted Mike followed Will back inside as Wang Chung's "Dance Hall Days" played the first chorus. Now MIKE was doing some thinking of his own, but he wasn't going to let it eat him up and spoil his night. Will had begged him not to allow it to do so, and Mike would have done anything Will asked him to. Jump off a cliff for ME this time? Done. Sell your kidney so we can buy our first home? Done. Move with me to New York and let's rent an apartment together? Done and done.

"Did you lovebirds run off to neck or something?" Max asked, which caused Will to gently swat at her with a laugh.

"NO!" Will cried. "We had to discuss something, that's all."

"Uh-huh," Jennifer said skeptically. "By 'talking,' do you mean—"

"Oh, leave them alone!" El defended with a soft giggle. "They're telling the truth!"

"Thank you, El!" Will said. "In case I haven't told you lately, you're the best sister ever!"

"No prob," she said. "Did Mom and Dad give you too much trouble or embarrass you? Before Diana picked me up, I thought Jon was gonna



use a whole roll of film and Mom was gonna grieve herself to death over my dress!”

“Ugh, same!” Will said. “If Mike hadn’t dragged me out, I’d probably still be there!”

“Well, I dunno about you all,” Jennifer cut in, “but I’m gonna take my girl out for a dance before they do the King/Queen bullshit.”

“I’ve Been Waiting for a Girl Like You” was now playing, and all of Mike & Will’s friends took their significant others out for a dance. Only Mike and Will remained seated, and both males were silent for a moment. They were too deep in thought about what to ACTUALLY say, but soon Mike broke that silence.

“Will, please just hear me out—“ he began.

“I know what you’re going to say,” Will interrupted. “You’re gonna say no and that we should wait awhile longer. But I’m getting so sick of—“

“Will! Mike!” they heard a familiar voice cry from behind them. It definitely erased any negative or uneasy thoughts as they turned to face their middle school science teacher, Scott Clarke.

“Mr. Clarke!” they exclaim in unison, each boy moving to give the man a long hug. Mike asked, “What are you doing here?!”

“They needed an extra chaperone,” Mr. Clarke said. “So, they called me and I was glad to help out. How have you two been? It’s been so long, and you both look so happy! How’s high school been treating you boys?”

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After catching up with Mr. Clarke, their friends came over to speak with him as well. Then, it was time to announce the Prom King & Queen, which ended up going to Lucas and Amanda. As they danced to the King/Queen song and after the hooping & hollering at the friends’ tables died down, Mike tried to continue the conversation that Mr. Clarke had unknowingly interrupted. The lighting was now a deep violet, and as Mike watched Lucas and Amanda dancing, he knew it was no use to pick up where they’d left off.

Mike was going to have to go through with what was bothering Will. Not because it was what WILL had wanted, but after speaking to him and having that conversation sink in, it was also what Mike had wanted. He wanted it more than ANYTHING, no matter the consequences either now, until graduation, or both.

As the slow song gave way to “Thriller,” Will and Mike laughed along with their friend group as Dustin & Lucas had attempted the “Thriller

dance.” Will had made a teasing comment about the fact that they hadn’t gotten any better since eighty-two, to which Dustin spouted some colorful words. The group all chatted through the next few songs, and when “Take My Breath Away” began to play, Mike held his hand out for Will to take.

“May I have this dance?” he asked with a slight bow.

Will giggled, taking Mike’s hand. “Of course, my prince,” he replied, causing Mike to jokingly huff as he led Will out for a slow dance.

Upon finding the perfect spot, the two began to move slowly with the music. Mike’s hands rested over Will’s waist, while Will reached up to wrap his arms around the back of Mike’s neck. It was a bit of an awkward position due to their height difference, but they made it work surprisingly well. As soon as they began to dance, Mike’s mind starting turning a million times per minute.

The entire point of his earlier discussion with Will had been about their relationship and the fact that it had still been kept secret to everyone outside family and friends. Will hated that they still had to hide, when Max and Jennifer could be more open with their relationship without a care. THAT’S what Will had wanted to talk about: Their one and really ONLY secret being exposed to the entire school (but for tonight, only the junior & senior classes, faculty, and chaperones).

Will was sick of hiding and wanted to go public, but Mike had vocalized his worry and skepticism over that plan. Hate crimes were a VERY real concern, especially in a town like Hawkins, and even though they didn’t have much high school time left, more severe bullying was also a possibility. Will didn’t care; he wanted everyone to know how much he loved Mike, and that he wasn’t ashamed of them or of their relationship.

“Hiding it makes it FEEL like we’re ashamed, and that being gay—and in your case, bisexual—is dirty and wrong,” Will had said. “Aren’t you sick of it? Aren’t you tired of hiding and being made to feel dirty and gross, when we aren’t?”

The truth was, Mike HAD been sick and tired of it. It took a little time for Will’s words to absorb in his mind and for Mike to give them more thought, but the more he processed it...the more he realized that Will had been right. They had NOTHING to be ashamed of, and if Max and Jennifer could be out and proud, then why couldn’t they?

“Will?” Mike finally said. “Hey, do you remember your last boyfriend? The last quarterback before he moved to Louisiana and

Lucas took the position?”

“Duh,” Will said with a soft laugh. “How could I ever forget? Dale Heathers. He was GORGEOUS, and really quite sweet at times. Why?”

“Well...” Mike said, looking around to make sure that no one was eavesdropping. When he saw that it was safe, he continued. “You had to keep it secret, because he was so popular and his dad was a big homophobic asshole, and Dale felt guilty because he had so much internalized homophobia from his father. It made him feel deeply ashamed and disgusted with his relationship with you. Remember?”

“Yeah,” Will said with a sigh. “Listen, I REALLY don’t wanna talk about my exes right now, especially Dale. Is there a point in bringing him up?”

“Yes,” Mike answered. “Look...I’m not Dale. Yeah, I’m on the swim team, but that hardly makes me Mr. Popularity. I’m still a huge loser and an even bigger dweeb in the eyes of most of the school, and I really don’t have all THAT much to lose. Not like Dale had.”

The song changed to “Up Where We Belong,” and Mike held a confused Will even closer. Will said, “I still don’t see the point. I—“

“You were right,” Mike interjected. “All this damn TIME, you were right. What we are, WHO we are, is nothing to be ashamed of. We aren’t gaining anything by hiding. Dale was extremely popular, handsome, six-foot-six, and had a TON to lose if people found out about the two of you. Me, I really don’t. My family knows we’re together and they’re supportive of that. Swimming, I can do that anytime I want. Water will always be around, and I wasn’t planning on ever joining the Olympics or anything, anyway.”

“Mike—“ Will tried to cut in, but Mike shushed him gently.

“The point is,” Mike began again, “I want people to know. I want them to see how damn much I love you, Will Byers. I don’t care about the consequences. In a month, we’re outta here for good. We’ll be at Purdue and no one there will know us or even CARE about the fact that we’re together. I’m sure we aren’t gonna be the only same-sex couple that’ll be there. I love you so much, Will, and I have for SO LONG.”

“Are you sure about this?” Will asked cautiously. “About being public, I mean. Once we go there, there’s no going back. So please, just be sure. Don’t do it because /I/ want you to. Do it because YOU want to. Because YOU’RE absolutely ready.”

“I do want to,” Mike said honestly. “I really do.”

“How do we go about doing it, though?” Will asked. “We can’t

exactly scream it for everyone to hear. That would be insane, even for us.”

Mike was already way ahead of Will. Without another word, and the sound of his hammering heart in his ears drowning out the playing song, Mike leaned down and pressed his lips softly to Will's. He felt Will tense beneath him, mostly from the surprise, but also partly due to nerves. Despite wanting to make themselves known to their classmates, Will was still very antsy about the whole situation. They could feel several sets of eyes on them, but they didn't stop yet. Mike gave Will's waist a comforting squeeze, pulling away reluctantly after a moment to look down at Will. The lights were still violet, and Will's large brown eyes were swimming with a few unshed tears as a grin broke over his lips. EVERYONE was staring, even their friends and their significant others who had already known. Lucas looked very fearful, but also prepared to spring into action if necessary. Dustin was also braced for a fight, eyes scanning the sea of shocked faces to make sure no one was out of line.

Troy, one of the boys who had bullied Mike and his friends for years, was dancing next to the two boys with his girlfriend, Serena Stevenson. He looked stunned, but there was also an expression of either disgust or even FEAR on his face. “No way!” he finally said. “I was right, all these years! Byers is a—“

But one warning, angry glare from Lucas had shut him up immediately.

“One more thing,” Mike said to Will, pulling his class ring out of a pocket on the inside of his suit jacket. He promptly dropped to one knee, and the music went low. People were gasping and staring, wide eyed, at the couple. “William Byers,” Mike began. “Ever since we met that day on the playground in kindergarten, when you kissed my scaped and bloody knees all better, I knew I loved you. When you went missing and I thought you were dead six years ago, part of me DIED. I wasn't the same until you came back, and then my life only got...better. You had plenty of ups and downs when you got back—we both did—but like the strong boy you were, you emerged with your head held high. Now, that strong boy is pretty much a MAN, and a man I'm proud to call my boyfriend and hell, someday hopefully my HUSBAND. You give my life meaning every single day. You've taught me & are STILL teaching me so much. You're my best friend, and we're going to be beginning our future together when we go to college together in the fall. I'm so excited for that, Will, you

have no idea. We're still way too young to get engaged, but...this will do for now."

Mike held the class ring between his fingers, taking Will's left hand in this own. "Will Byers, will you accept my class ring? As a sort of pre-PRE-engagement ring?"

Will, who was crying by that point, simply nodded with a huge smile. "Yes!" he managed. "Of course I will!"

Mike slid the ring onto Will's middle finger, and it fit perfectly. Mike stood to kiss Will again, and the room broke out in shattering applause. Even TROY was clapping, although not as cheerfully or enthusiastically as everyone else. It was more obligatory applause than genuine applause on his end. Mike spun Will around happily as the music turned back up, Journey's "Faithfully" now playing.

Mr. Clarke was crying and clapping enthusiastically as he made his way to both boys, and their friends were also beginning to crowd around them. Max and Jen were kissing & embracing them, and Mr. Clarke also pulled both Mike and Will into a tearful embrace. He kept saying how happy & proud he was of them for taking such a stand and for being so brave to do something that big in front of most of the school.

As Mike stood there, accepting congratulations from his former science teacher and various classmates, he couldn't help but feel proud as well. Let the bullying come. Let the hate pour in. None of that mattered to Mike. In fact, the only thing that mattered most in this world to him was wearing a powder-blue tie and Mike's class ring on his finger.